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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 12, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 12, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL

HURRIYET/TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI/CUMHURİYET/YENİ
SAFAK/RADIKAL/BOLGE/EVRENSEL/ZAMAN/SABAH: Explosion in military lodgings in Diyarbakir killed six persons, including four children. Eight persons were rescued but sustained wounds. Teams dispatched from Ankara are also participating in the rescue works. It is reported that the central heating boiler caused the explosion and destroyed half of the five-storey building inhabited by forty people. Experts disclosed that the static structure of the building was not in conformity with the zoning plan. Mustafa Baran, 27, who does the maintenance work on the boilers was detained. The Land Forces Commander, General Basbug, visited the scene of explosion.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI/EVRENSEL: Approximately twenty thousand people attended DTP's meeting in Dogubeyazit of Agri province. DTP's Co-chairpersons asked everybody to take responsibility for peace and that they would continue rendering peace efforts despite provocations. DTP Co-chairman, Ahmet Turk, addressing the AKP and CHP, said "You requested us to help stop the bloodshed. And we realized that. Why are you silent now?" The crowd shouted "Long live President Apo. End to operations. Peace should not be a hope but a reality. Kurdish and Turkish mothers hand in hand. The ambassador for peace is in Imrali." slogans.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Preparations have been made by mayors, city-council members and representatives, who could not get into the parliament because of the national threshold, for marching from Silopi to Ankara on December 16, 2006. The meeting is being organized by DTP. The participants aim to turn the ceasefire into a lasting peace.

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: In order to hold its 1st Ordinary Convention, the DTP District Office in Cermik of Diyarbakir rented the wedding hall of the municipality. One day prior the meeting, the Mayor of Cermik, Mehmet Akdag -from Democratic Left Party- cancelled the allocation of the wedding hall for that purpose. DTP's Provincial Chairman for Diyarbakir condemned the mayor's behavior.

HURRIYET CUKUROVA: The TNP forces launching an operation seized 25 kilos of heroin, one shotgun and 25 rounds of ammunition in a minibus traveling from Hakkari to Van. The minibus driver and a passenger in the minibus have been detained by police.

EVRENSEL: According to Firat News Agency, a twenty-seven year old woman, who opened a green-yellow-red [colors of the Kurdistan flag] colored scarf during DTP Co-chairperson Ahmet Turk's recent visit to Ercis of Van, has been imprisoned in Ercis on the charges of "harboring and assisting PKK." Two children had been arrested by police and released following their depositions on the grounds of having shouted pro-PKK slogans during DTP Co-chairman Ahmet Turk's greeting remarks in Ercis.

EVRENSEL/BOLGE/EKSPRES: The Incirlik AB, which has been used by the US for 51 years in operations in the Middle East and against countries in the region, continues to be used for logistic support purposes for Iraq. 103,000 tons of cargo has been dispatched from Incirlik AB to Iraq in the past 18 months.

BOLGE: A group of eight TAYAD -Inmates families Solidarity Association- members undertook a sit-in action and made a press announcement that convicted prisoners in F-type prisons in Turkey are being subjected to isolation and demanded that isolation should be lifted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

HURRIYET CUKUROVA: The President of Chamber of Industry (PCI) of Adana, Umit Ozgumus, said that their visit with 31 businessmen from 22 industrial establishments to Iran in November 2006 already produced good results. Mr. Ozgumus said Adana has entered into a new period with Iran and that businessmen had already made connections for 30 million US Dollar trade with Iran.

SABAH: Under a project conducted by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kahramanmaras and financed by the United Nations

ADANA 00000259 002 OF 003

Environment Fund, biogas is being produced from animal dung in Ayaklicaoluk village. The fermented fertilizer will be used in organic farming. The Kahramanmaras Governor, Ilhan Ates, said that the number of people asking for jobs was very small in Kahramanmaras, and added that an area of 925 acres on the Gaziantep freeway was being considered for an Organized Industrial Zone. Here are some tips about Kahramanmaras: It is 11th largest province of Turkey in terms of the area it covers and 17th in terms of population. It is number one cotton yarn producer in Turkey, producing 29 percent of Turkey's production. It is number one red pepper producer in Turkey -20,000 tons annual production. It currently supplies 12.5 percent of Turkey's energy from the Afsin-Elbistan thermoelectric power plants operating with coal and its share will increase to 20.4 percent with coming into circuit of the 5 dams under construction in the province. It produces 70 percent of Turkey's stainless steel kitchenware.

THE NEW IRAQI REPORT AND KURDS

By: Baki Gul

TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI daily - December 12, 2006

Is the United States who had chosen Kurds as allies for itself revising this alliance? This appears to be the case while looking at the "Iraqi Report" prepared by former congressman Lee Hamilton and Former Secretary of State James Baker. The Southern Kurdish leaders openly opposed the report after it was disclosed. They even said that the report was unacceptable.

The Kurdistan Institute for Political Problems announced that the report was to the disadvantage of the Kurds on the ground that it did not touch upon the rights of the Kurds and proposed postponing article 140 concerning Kirkuk. In his announcement, Mesut Barzani too had expressed that the report did not satisfy the Kurds. Putting into circulation former Baathists in the reconstruction of Iraq is another proposal that Kurds do not want to be realized. The Iraqi President, Celal Talabani, has been saying that such a proposal would be in opposition to the long struggle the Iraqi people have been making against dictatorship.

The local parties and nongovernmental organizations in Southern Kurdistan will also refuse this report by making press announcements. But the USA does not have an official response to Kurds' reaction yet. Former US diplomat, Peter Galbraith, who is particularly interested only in Southern Kurdistan, called out the Kurdistan government to "cut its ties with the Central Government" in case the report was put into action. This thought seems to be Galbraith's personal idea.

According to the proposals cited in the report announced last week, it is emphasized that the violence in Iraq can not be solved solely by military measures. The need for Iraq to intensify its diplomatic ties with its neighbors is also emphasized.

The United States still has not managed to get out of the chaotic situation in Iraq. As a result of intervention in Iraq, 2900 American soldiers have been killed and 21,000 soldiers have been wounded up to now. Attention is drawn to the fact that the US has spent 400 billion US Dollars and that the cost of the Iraq war will reach 1 trillion US Dollars shortly.

The possibility that the report submitted to the US President and Congress be adopted as the USA's new Iraq policy has been making Kurds uneasy. Particularly the interpretation of the US proposal that intensive diplomacy needs to be pursued with Iraq's neighbors has sharpened the appetite of Iran, Syria and Turkey who are hostile to the Kurdish [state] formation. It is certain that these three neighboring states of Iraq will unconditionally unify in an anti-Kurdish alliance and thus try to get concessions from the US on the Kurdish subject.

The Southern Kurds think that they will be left alone and all their gains will be at risk if the United States that chose the Kurds as its fundamental ally during the intervention in Iraq adopts this report as its new Iraq policy. The results of the relationship that the US will enter into with the Syria-Iran-Turkey trio, and that will unite in an anti-Kurdish front, might end to its disadvantage. This is an unpredictable aspect [of such a policy]. What is more, the basic issue handled during Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayip Erdogan's recent visits to Iran and Syria was what [might] be done against Kurds-PKK.

ADANA 00000259 003 OF 003

Consequently, the first issue that Baser and Ralston would talk about is the Kurds. The expressions in the report will strengthen Turkey's hands in its demands from the United States.

Besides, Turkey's [counting on] a share for itself from the picture in Iraq has a great influence on the lack of progress in the truce and its [practical failure]. [Given the] intellectual and political structures in Turkey, the Southern Kurds also do not have [a role] in maintaining the cease fire process.

That is, if the United States revises its policies in Iraq and keeps the Kurds in a passive position, Iraq's neighbors will deepen the chaos in Iraq and will jeopardize the relatively secure climate in the Kurdish region. Consequently, the Kurds have to act with more common sense and update their democratic unity policy.

GREEN